



**The Alpaca Loom  
Coffee Shop & Weaving Studio**

**Alpaca Management Advice**

(revised October 2017)

Please keep in mind that alpacas are gregarious animals and should be kept with their kind, preferably of the same sex, unless working as herd guards in a sheep flock.

**Change of Environment**

If you want to introduce alpacas into a new area: Clean and disinfect the stables (e.g. Virkon S, F10), especially for example old shearing sheds. Alpacas are susceptible to all sheep diseases, e. g. clostridial diseases like pulpy kidney. Although we do vaccinate with Covexin 10 twice a year, there is always some risk left.

If the floor of the stable were made of loam/soil, it would be advisable to take the top layer out and replace it by a concrete slab that one can disinfect.

Alpacas are creatures of habit and travelling and change of environment will cause them stress. Stress might encourage sickness like ulcers, or bacterial diseases.

**Feeding**

Feed / pellets should be fed out of troughs and never from the ground. Fresh water should be freely available. Water standing in warm temperatures increases the chance of growing bacterial diseases.

For any ruminant change of feed, change of environment and pasture causes dramatic impact on their digestive system. One needs to phase out the "old" feed and slowly introduce the "new" feed. The bacteria in the digestive system must get used and adapt to the changes.

If you introduce new pellets / concentrates start with small portions! We will supply some of our concentrate mix for changeover. Please give them a part of this food and about only 25% of the "new" food. Then slowly increase the amount of "new" feed and reduce the old one until you only feed your "new" feed.

When introducing alpacas to new pasture, let them only graze for a short while in the beginning and slowly extend the time.

Alpacas need 1,5 – 2,0 kg of feed every day. We recommend oat hay and / or grass ad lib and some pellets / muesli depending on their age and need.

At this stage we can recommend "CAPSTONE Flexitime" -

[www.capstonehorsefeed.com/feeds\\_flexitime.php](http://www.capstonehorsefeed.com/feeds_flexitime.php)

This muesli has a very good mineral content. As it is high in copper we urgently recommend to never feed more than 200 g per head per day!! An overdose of copper can be deadly.

For lactating females we recommend to give some lucerne as additional protein supply.

Please make sure that the lucerne is milled as the hard stems could cause infection of the jawbone.

For extra energy you might need to add a horse muesli or game pellets, especially for your lactating females.

Always make sure that all feed is urea free, so basically all your horse, game, calf or lamb feeds work very well to increase energy levels.

Make sure the fodder is of good quality and does not contain micro-toxins, mould or poisonous plants.

**Vaccinations**

All alpacas leaving us will have an up-to-date Covexin 10 vaccination (MSD)

Animal Health). They also have been vaccinated for Rift Valley Fever (Disease Control Africa), Blue Tongue (Disease Control Africa), as well as for Anthrax and Botulism (Botuthrax and Botuvax by Intervet).

#### **Parasite Control**

Alpaca skin is extremely sensitive – their fine exquisite fibre comes with delicate skin, therefore any open wounds must be treated immediately.

We recommend fly control and “Wipe-out” for their protection. We found a footbath with Amitraz or Amipor Pour-On works well as mite control.

Alpaca fibre contains little lanolin and therefore rain can penetrate more easily. We would recommend that especially young animals should not be kept outside without shelter in cold and rainy weather. Some shade is of course also advisable in summer time.

For parasite control we recommend to make diatomaceous earth available to your animals ad lib, which is also very cost effective.

We do not recommend routine deworming. If your animals are looking well, growing well and are healthy, they are coping well with their worm load, if any.

However, if there is a parasite problem in your area, please act accordingly.

If your animals seem to be doing poorly condition-wise we would recommend to take a faecal sample and have it examined by a vet and act accordingly.

#### **Other Management**

Depending on your soil toenails might need trimming several times a year. For this we use normal pruning shears and trim the toenails parallel to the ground.

Teeth keep on growing throughout the alpacas life and might, again depending on your circumstances, need trimming about once a year. We are using a dremel with a tile-cutting bit for this.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for toenail and teeth trimming demonstrations.

Alpacas also will need shearing once a year. There might be an alpaca or sheep shearer in your area. Alternatively, we do offer an annual shearing course every year mid to end of September.

#### **Recommended Literature**

Llama and Alpaca Neonatal Care by B. B. Smith, K. I. Timm, P. O. Long

Medicine and Surgery of South American Camelids: Llama, Alpaca, Vicuna, Guanaco by Murray E. Fowler (May 15, 1998)

#### **After-Sales Support Contact**

You are welcome to contact us for advise, but if in doubt, please contact your vet.

If in any doubt or in any way unsure, please consult your vet as this is by no means intended to replace veterinary advice, but rather as some food for thought.

## **The Alpaca Loom Coffee Shop & Weaving Studio**

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